

Young Leaders Institute 2012

On May 5-9, 2012 SAALT convened 15 university students from across the country. at the first *Young Leaders Institute* in Washington, DC. The Institute offered Young Leaders the opportunity to build leadership skills, connect with activists and mentors, and learn about how public policy is shaped. The *Young Leaders Institute* was made possible through the generous support of Comcast and Southwest.

"It's been a meaningful experience to see the constant exchange of ideas, networking, seeing so many prominent officials doing what I want to do. I know I'll go back and contact them. There's so much room in politics for South Asians to grow. I never knew we were so underrepresented in the political community."

- Vishal, University of MD



An Overview of the *Young Leaders Institute 2012*

- **Young Leaders** 15 university students representing 12 campuses and cities across the U.S. attended the 4-day intensive training
 - University of Southern California (Los Angeles, CA)
 - The University of Chicago (Chicago, IL)
 - The University of Texas at Austin (Austin, TX)
 - University of Florida (Gainesville, FL)
 - University of Tampa (Tampa, FL)
 - Bowdoin College (Brunswick, ME)
 - University of Maryland, College Park (College Park, MD)
 - Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ)
 - University of Washington (Seattle, WA)
 - Stanford University (Stanford, CA)
 - University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA)
 - California State University, Fullerton (Fullerton, CA)
- **Knowledge** Students explored the history of South Asians and movement building in the U.S.; racial justice; and power and politics in the policy-making process

- **Advocacy** Students attended the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans Policy Summit on Capitol Hill and joined roundtable discussions on immigration, education, Civil Rights, health, housing and economic justice, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander issues
- **Celebration** In honor of APA Heritage Month, students attended the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus Ceremony: APA Heritage Month Congressional Celebration—with Nancy Pelosi, Rep. Judy Chu, Secretary Norman Mineta, Rep. Mike Honda, and others—on Capitol Hill and the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies Gala featuring President Obama’s first address to the AAPINH community
- **Tools** Interviewing and audio editing training by the People’s Production House provided tools to capture and elevate community narratives in engaging ways
- **Mentorship** Students were matched to inspirational mentors at Mentorship Dinners and will continue to engage with their mentor throughout the year
- **Professional Development** Resume, job application and interviewing, and networking training allowed students to develop and practice critical skills as they prepare for academic and professional pursuits
- **Agents of Change** Each student developed an Action Plan to address an issue impacting their campus or local South Asian community; Action Plans will be implemented in the upcoming year to create social change around:

- Women’s empowerment and gender equality
- Immigrant rights and DREAMers
- South Asian identity
- Religious discrimination
- LGBT issues
- Civic and political engagement

"My experience here has been great, I've met 14 students who've come from different walks of life, all over the country...it's been different from any other institute or conference that I've ever attended, because of the fact that it was so interactive... it was really based on how we learned and not just a set schedule that we had to work in."

- Naureen, University of Chicago



Next steps

SAALT will continue to work with Young Leaders Institute alumni throughout the upcoming academic year in a variety of ways.

- Support the further development and implementation of Action Plans to create social change on the campuses and in local communities of students; Some Action Plans will seek to achieve the following:

Build campus awareness and partnerships among students groups to address LGBT intolerance and discrimination

Bring together undocumented youth to learn about rights and educational opportunities and elevate this awareness in the broader community

Partner with local organizations to educate the community and police department to address racial and religious discrimination and profiling



"This has been one of the best experiences of my life."

- Amit, Rutgers University

- Host a student-led conference calls to partner with students to identify Action Plan support needs and determine best next steps to remain connected and engaged
- Highlight and share with SAALT supporters the work of students through social media, website, and blogging
- Provide opportunities for students to participate in *Be the Change*, SAALT's annual national day of volunteerism that encourages communities to answer Mahatma Gandhi's challenge to "be the change you wish to see in the world"
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with SAALT's local and national work around issues such as civic and political engagement, immigration, racial profiling, and bullying
- Partner with Institute alumni to develop *Young Leaders Institute 2013* to ensure a robust annual training and active participant ownership

"I am a Hefty Promise student and a Pell grant recipient, both programs support low income students with tuition and housing. As a recipient of these, I am only awarded a specific allotment, so anything beyond that I am unable to support. I had the opportunity to attend YLI solely due to Southwest's Green Pass, and the experience was one of a kind, I cannot thank Southwest and Comcast enough for allowing me this opportunity."

- Mohammad, University of Washington

